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PROHIBITION IN POLITICS.

WHETHER temperance shall be taken out of the domain of morals and put into the domain of politics, is no longer a question. Some regiments of that wing of the temperance army which fights under the banner of Prohibition have held a convention, nominated a president, and conducted a campaign. In this convention the cause of woman suffrage was formally and practically associated with that of prohibition, and we are thus enabled to survey at one glance the fields won by both. As a guide to future action, it is well to consider whether thus far the methods of the new party are better than those of the old parties, whether its aims are higher, whether its accomplishment is greater.

The avowed object of the Prohibition party was to supply the defects of the old parties. The Pittsburgh Convention was postponed until the other conventions had been held, for the expressed purpose of giving the dominant parties an opportunity to stand by the cause of Home *versus* Saloon. The opportunity seems, indeed, to have been offered more coyly than it was accepted. The Prohibition messengers were invited to speak before the Greenback Convention, and were assured of a courteous hearing in the Democratic Committee, but, says Miss Willard, with a sudden and surprising access of timidity, "we had no heart to avail ourselves of the opportunity, after asking the Republicans in vain." It looks a little as if the delegation feared that the accommodating Greenbackers and Democrats might nail the Prohibition plank into their platform out of hand, and leave the new-party people without a board to stand on. But the wise, womanly flies buzzed away from that pretty little parlor, in spite of the "courteous" assurances of the wily, flattering Democratic spider, Major Burke, and set up a party of their own. Its object was most winsome. "Women," said President

Willard, in her annual address at St. Louis, in the autumn of 1884, "women will come into politics and cleanse that Stygian pool as the waters of Marah were cleansed." I have never heard that the waters of Marah were cleansed, or that the Stygian pool needed cleansing—if it were not a river, to begin with. The Augean stable was probably in the eloquent speaker's mind, but as that building has been rather overused of late, it might have been temporarily closed for repairs, thus, as it were, forcing the convention to take to the water. At any rate, said Miss Willard, "woman will make home-like every place she enters." The object of the union is, in one comprehensive phrase, with Miss Willard's own italics, "*to make the whole world HOME-LIKE.*"

Yes, but there are homes and homes.

By what methods was this home-likeness advanced? The debates at the St. Louis meeting were, indeed, one might almost say, caressing. The speakers used, not the rough words of the Chicago conventions, but the endearing language of the home circle. The audience were addressed as "Sisters," and even as "Dear Sisters." When there was apprehension of trouble, the leaders wanted "Miss Willard to tell us how we can get sweetly out of it." "One of Iowa's loveliest women, sweet So-and-so, came gently forward, and taking my hand in hers"—certainly set a good example to the "rowdy" male West. Miss Willard herself received "such a baptism of the spirit of love and the love of my beloved sisters, that I cannot find words to express to you my deep sense of appreciation." Another speaker said she had "felt the tender pressure of your kisses on my lip, and your arms about me."

This is making it very home-like indeed, almost too home-like. Undeniably they did not fondle thus at the unregenerate old-party conventions. But this was before the election, and already Miss Willard was sweetly comforting her comrades that "the 4th of November is not far off, and at its close the galling cross-fire of harsh criticism will suddenly cease." The 4th of November is a good deal farther off now than it was then, and the galling cross-fire has rather deepened into an old-fashioned partisan cannonade, in the thick of which Miss Willard and her candidate may be seen fighting for dear life. Instead of settling down after election "to that manifest destiny of quiet routine work" which was prophesied, they are obliged to defend themselves against the charges of indignant Prohibitionists who

did not wish to be led over to the Democracy by any saint of the Old Testament or the New. Scarcely were the Prohibitionists outside the all-embracing atmosphere of St. Louis, when the "dear sisters" with their Quaker guns suddenly disappeared, and men and women alike went at hearty and well-delivered fist-cuffs. Mrs. Carse, President of the Board, charges that critics of the W. C. T. U. are cowardly and false; that "Iowa's most noble woman," Mrs. Foster, has been writing letters to the secular and religious press in a vain endeavor to disrupt the union; those who did not approve the St. Louis action are no longer "dear sisters," but "a few dissatisfied individuals," who "have deserted the ranks," and whose action against the Union is "envy or slander." The president of another union in turn characterizes this charge of Mrs. Carse's as a "malicious attack upon a true and noble woman," and declares that, contrary to Mrs. Carse's assurance, "there are few unions in which the harmony is not more or less broken"; that the action of the St. Louis Convention indicates a "willingness to sacrifice the cause to political demagogues to build up a political party"; that Mrs. Foster is steadily trying to rectify the mistake and to reestablish harmony. Of the W. C. T. U. Convention she speaks in most man-like fashion, as "the innocent, unsuspecting victim of partisan demagogues." It is affirmed "with much less sweetness than light" that Miss Willard wanted to help the Democrats in the late campaign; that she did grievous injury to the temperance organization; that at the Pittsburgh Convention, Iowa, the leading Prohibition State, was absolutely denied representation because it was known that its temperance people refused to take temperance into politics; that St. John, the Prohibition candidate, was treacherous; that Mrs. Foster has done more for the cause of temperance than Miss Willard and all her partisans together; that Miss Willard's sentiment and sympathies are with the South; and that Mrs. Foster was removed from her high position because she remained true to temperance and refused to drag the cause at the chariot-wheels of Democracy.

"The W. C. T. U.," says a leading Prohibitionist, "during the last campaign descended from its high position and became the willing ally and unconscious tool of selfish politicians. It did this deliberately. . . . A careful examination of the statistics of the late campaign completely explodes the claim to sagacity or honesty, perhaps both, in this deplorable movement."

"Lash to a retired position the tramps of the platform who have made the advocacy of this cause a profession, and seek opportunities to labor at a stipulated price for God, and home, and native land. We suffer to-day because we have permitted an insignificant but noisy minority to strut before the nation as the only temperance men whose ballots possess a conscience. . . . We must begin by rebuking the brazen effrontery of the temperance politician in such an unmistakable manner that his callous cheek shall feel a healthy smart."

Tramps? The suave voice of the St. Louis Jacob has given way to the rough fist of the old-party Esau. Brazen effrontery? Is it the "dear sisters" that "strut"? Surely the Stygian pool is quickly running foul again. The sweet womanliness of St. Louis strikes out from the shoulder exactly like the sour manliness of Chicago. Its only home-likeness is to the lively and vigorous clapper-clawing in which any loving and high-spirited family occasionally engages around the dear domestic hearth-stone; but the family never holds it up to the world as the admirable method of prayer and purity!

Unquestionably the political Prohibitionists started out with Sweetness and Light on their banner. As unquestionably the stress of battle and defeat has given to the sweetness a little acidity. How has the light fared? Have more inexorable consciences, more delicate instincts, discerned profounder truths, held up a loftier standard, than were to be found in the old Republican organization?

At the Louisville Convention, in 1882, and at the Detroit Convention, a year later, the W. C. T. U. adopted a resolution to "lend its influence to that party which should furnish the best embodiment of Prohibition principles." In the autumn of 1884 it selected its party and lent its influence. Needless to say that the party selected was not the Republican party. The party that the W. C. T. U. considered as furnishing the best embodiment of Prohibition principles was the Democratic party. As between the Republican and the Democratic party, the W. C. T. U. candidate declared for the Democratic party, and against the Republican party. He said, at Worcester, Mass., "The Republican party is no better than the Democratic party on the liquor question." "If there ever was a party which deserved to be ruined, it is the Republican party." "I will do all in my power to defeat that party." "The Republican party

has no principles worthy of being upheld by anybody." In Olathe, Kansas, he went further and said that he would rather the Democratic party would come into power. Elsewhere he recognized and justified the fact that a vote for him from a Republican was a half vote for Democracy.

The reasoning by which the W. C. T. U. convinces itself that the Democratic party furnishes the best embodiment of Prohibition principles, is illustrated by its candidate's indictment of the Republican party in Kansas for not re-indorsing the prohibitory Constitutional amendment at their last State Convention. The resolution adopted was :

"That we favor a faithful and honest enforcement of the Constitutional Amendment, that the full effects of prohibition may be realized, that the declared will of the people may be respected and the majesty of the law vindicated."

The mind that can believe this to be a rejection of the Prohibitory Amendment can just as easily believe that the Democratic party is the embodiment of prohibition. The Prohibition candidate reads the Republican letter of acceptance as a declaration "in favor of making the liquor traffic permanent in this country, to the end that the States and Territories might derive a revenue therefrom." This rendering throws no light on Republican principles, but it does throw light on the character and caliber, the instinct for truth, of the Prohibition candidate, and of the men and women that accepted his interpretations.

How successful has been the Prohibition party in developing, marshaling, or revealing the strength of the Prohibition movement? During the campaign we were repeatedly assured that the cause was rapidly gaining. The Prohibition candidate himself talked hopefully of a million votes, and the "Independent," a leading Prohibition paper, joined its instinct for truth with Mr. St. John's, and argued upon the basis of two million votes. The National Prohibition Committee in New York, Jan. 8, 1885, gave the recorded vote for St. John at 95,000 in thirty-four States. The "Union Signal," the organ of the W. C. T. U., estimates the American vote gained to St. John by the fusion at 50,000, which leaves the total Prohibition vote in all the States 45,000. By no authority and no combination has the Prohibition vote been set higher than 150,000. The total vote of the country was 10,036,057.

Comparing this political Prohibition vote with the Prohibition vote when it was not made a political issue, we find that in four States—Maine, Ohio, Iowa, and Kansas—Prohibition has received 620,000 votes non-political, against 45,000 votes political, in thirty-four States. In Iowa alone, after a most persuasive and even thrilling, but non-political campaign, Prohibition received 125,000 votes. The political campaign of 1884 reduced that vote to 1472. Is this an onward movement? Does it indicate wise generalship?

The Southern vote, admittedly repressed on other issues, but pronounced free on this, has an equally uncertain sound. The W. C. T. U., five days before the Presidential election, boasted that the cry of the "solid South" had little terror for them. The Southern delegates that sat with the Northern in convention, "whose hearts are as our hearts, whose hands are firmly and lovingly grasped in ours," in the home-like new-party way, were sternly contrasted with "the politicians who have tears only for the woes of the negro in the South." Miss Willard declared that it was "a ghost, and not a campaign issue, that is paraded by campaign orators who dwell upon a 'solid South.'" In May of the same year, the National Temperance Society said that "fully one half the territory of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee, with large portions of Kentucky, Arkansas, and Mississippi, are under Prohibition." Of these States South Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas gave, according to the official returns, no vote at all for the Prohibition candidate. "Alabama, this grand State," said the "Union Signal," on Oct. 30, 1884, "never intended to be left, lost, or defeated; so right to the front, with her sister States, she is gloriously stemming the tide." Five days later she stemmed the tide as she would stem a mint-julep—with a straw, giving the Democratic candidate 92,973 votes and the Prohibition candidate 610! Kentucky cast 3006 votes for Prohibition; against Prohibition, 271,433. Nine Southern States, said to be largely prohibitory, gave 1795 Prohibition votes. In the whole South I do not find recorded 15,000 Prohibition votes. Every Southern State went for unmitigated Democracy. Miss Willard's ghost materialized, on the 4th of November, into 153 electoral votes solid for free rum and the lost cause. Could there be a more pitiful contrast between promise and performance? Is it any wonder that unhome-like, masculine, old-party veterans should, in the

first flush of ungallant anger, call Miss Willard "a Democratic cat's-paw"?

But the Prohibition vote has yet a sadder tale to tell. It was made the test of integrity and of purity, as well as of temperance. The New York "*Independent*," a strong Prohibition paper — whose proprietor, Mr. Henry C. Bowen, as a Federal officer, Collector of Internal Revenue in the Brooklyn district when the Hon. Hugh McCulloch was Secretary of the Treasury under President Johnson, must have a very accurate conception of official uprightness, at least of what Mr. McCulloch's idea of official uprightness used to be — characterizes the Prohibition candidate as the "one candidate in the field whose official and moral uprightness cannot be impeached." The Prohibition vote was entreated from "every man who wants to enter his moral protest in November." The name of the Prohibition candidate was declared to "stand for morality as well as for Prohibition; he has gained an untold strength among those who have turned to him as the one candidate who embodies personal and official purity."

"It is quite certain," said this incorruptible ex-Collector, "that the Republican and the Democratic candidates are not really wanted, either of them, by the respectable and conscientious voters of this country. The best men of both parties are at heart opposed to them, and will not vote for them. Good men of all parties will hang their heads with shame if either should be successful." These men — the good, the best — were declared to be flocking to the standard of St. John, whose movement "represents the only hope, politically, of the home, the church, and the nation." Great surprises were predicted on this basis. "When men come to face the issue in November, with all local questions laid aside, and consider conscientiously their duty to the country, to the cause of morals and righteousness, they will pronounce a verdict which will have no joy in it for bad men." "In the West the St. John vote will be especially large. In New York it is likely to be much greater than is generally supposed. Through New England thousands of dissatisfied Republicans will vote for St. John." "The surprise in November will be, not that this or that one was elected, but that so many were bold enough to burst all ties in support of official and personal purity. No comparison could be made between the personal characters of the Republican, the Democratic, and the Prohibition

candidates, that would not be detrimental to the two former," the latter being "the only unassailable candidate in the field."

The "Independent" was mistaken. There was one comparison that could be made, and that was made by that old English method, a jury of the vicinage. The jury of the vicinage passed a verdict on the Republican candidate. From his own ward, his own city, his own county, his own State, the Republican candidate received a larger majority than any candidate had received for twenty years. The Republican majority rose instantly around him from less than 9000 to more than 20,000. In the State of his birth, it rose from 37,000 to 80,000. The Democratic candidate maintained the strength of his party, and received in his own State a total vote of more than half a million. The Prohibition candidate in his own State—of which, like the Democratic candidate, he had once been Governor—received 4273 votes. In the same State the Republican candidate received 153,396 votes. In the State of Mr. St. John's home, where he was best known, and where the Prohibition cause was best organized, its candidate received considerably less than two per cent. of the total vote. This is not decisive of the personal characters of the candidates, but it is a comparison of their personal characters, in which the detriment does not fall where the Prohibition umpire said that it would fall; and it falls so far away from the place predicted as to be decisive of the umpire's instinct for truth.

In the whole country,—from New England, from New York, from the aroused West, and the prohibitory South,—out of ten million voters, the number of those that flocked to the standard of official integrity and moral purity, who pronounced for God and home and native land,—dissatisfied Republicans and enthusiastic Prohibitionists, all told,—was exactly 95,000!

We are forbidden to doubt that this was a test vote. The "Independent," before election, pronounced the claim of President Woolsey, Judge Noah Davis, and others, that the Prohibition party did not represent the Prohibitionists, to be "almost ridiculous." We are obliged to consider it a representative vote. Eliminating the 45,000 confessed Prohibitionists, we have, out of ten millions of voters, fifty thousand flocking for official integrity and moral purity. Forty-eight hundred thousand bad men wagging their heads over a bad man's victory, forty-eight hundred thousand bad men shaking their heads over

a bad man's defeat, and only fifty thousand good men to hang their heads for shame. I am not familiar with the statistics of the Old World, but I am afraid that Sodom had a better chance than the great republic. The "Independent" was right in one respect—it is a surprise. Mr. St. John's "untold strength" still remains untold; but his told strength, as the one candidate that embodies personal and official purity, seems to indicate that he embodies it exactly as the Democratic party embodies the principle of prohibition.

"But," says the political Prohibitionist, gracefully waving aside the Arabic numerals, "the party of Abolition did not jump to a majority in a day. Did the men who voted for James G. Birney throw away their votes?" Certainly. At least they seem to have thought so themselves, for they very soon stopped throwing them anywhere, and disbanded. The history of the Liberty party, the one historical justification of the political Prohibitionists, shows the danger of slight knowledge, of fastening on a superficial similarity without real historical discrimination. The two cases have little in common, and the little they have in common forebodes disaster to Prohibition partisanship. The Abolitionists of 1844 found no party willing to advocate their cause or to embody their principles, or in any way to advance their purpose. The Whig party and the Democratic party alike turned a deaf ear, and not only a deaf ear, but a cold shoulder and often a fighting front. Prohibitionists, on the contrary, have always found in the Republican party friends to their cause, often friends to their methods. In all the States where Prohibition has been strong enough to secure legislation, it has secured it through the action of the Republican party. In no State is there any trouble for lack of legislation. In every State, however strongly prohibitory, — in Maine, in Kansas, in Iowa, — legislation is in advance of public sentiment. There is, therefore, no need of a third party to enact laws; there is need of instruction and influence to bring people up to the standard of the party of the first part, the Republican party — in the character and intelligence of its individual members, in the elevation of its aims, in the purity of its methods, and the success of its accomplishments, the noblest party ever developed by free institutions for the defense of free institutions, and never nobler than now in its temporary defeat by an unexpected betrayal.

Again: the Liberty party did not, as is so often claimed, nominate Fremont or elect Lincoln. The Liberty party did exactly what the Prohibition party has done — made a shy at everything and accomplished nothing. The Liberty party started out to abolish slavery. The Prohibition party started out to abolish drunkenness. The Liberty party made no headway at all, and in eight years gave up the ghost. If the Prohibition party has made headway, it is the way of a broken head. Slavery was finally abolished on the line of "No more extension of slave territory," corresponding exactly to the prohibition of Dr. Crosby and Dr. Thayer, and others who would break up the saloon business. The only lesson that the Birney movement teaches to the Prohibition party is the uselessness of its existence; the only presage is a speedy dissolution.

So far as there is a parallelism, the lesson is not less disastrous. The candidacy of Mr. Birney defeated Mr. Clay and elected Mr. Polk, and thus brought about the Mexican war, with its demoralization, its loss of life, and the subsequent acquisition of territory from Mexico for the upbuilding of more slave States. Over this war-won territory came the struggle for the Wilmot proviso, scarcely allayed by the compromises of 1850, with their infamous Fugitive Slave law. It was the courage of these successive victories that emboldened the South to break down the Missouri compromise of 1820, to press the Supreme Court into the service of slavery by practically taking it under the protection of the National Government, till one daring tyranny after another aroused the country and elected a President pledged to resist the spread of slavery into the National territory. Then the South, arrogant with the sixteen years of power that Mr. Birney's candidacy had granted them, drew the sword, and it was not sheathed until nine thousand millions of money had been blown into powder, until five hundred thousand young men, the best and bravest, were cast into bloody graves, and a million more, wasted and wounded, were left to a languishing life. This is the path on which the Prohibitionists have started. Do they mean to follow it? They have enthroned the Demon of unrestricted drink. It is not impossible that they may give him a ruinous rule of sixteen years as their exemplars gave to the Demon of Slavery. But the way is not less bitter; the goal is not less bloody. More than the nine thousand millions of treasure will be poured

out in libation to a deadlier Moloch than war. More than the half million men who sleep in honored graves will sink to graves of dishonor. When a race of drunkards has been reared, will it be easier to fight and conquer a diseased appetite? Will moral suasion be more potential with a population besotted by free rum, than with one partially redeemed from the tyranny of alcohol by agencies always opposed by the Democratic party? Is it indeed the only way of converting the world to Christ, to give the devil supreme control for half a generation?

The effect of such action is not, unhappily, a matter of pure speculation. Its disastrous results are, unhappily, not the mere forebodings of disappointment. In a smaller sphere a similar experiment has been carried to actual conclusion. In Maine, Prohibitionists, not satisfied with the manner in which the Republicans embodied their principles, put up separate tickets of their own, and in many instances succeeded in electing Democratic candidates. How great is the mischief that even a small vote may do, is clearly seen in the municipal election of Portland, March 2, 1885. Although the enforcement of the State law is in the hands of local officers, and may be made a dead letter or a terror to evil-doers, according to their sentiments, and although the Republican party in Maine has been identified with temperance reform ever since temperance reform was organized, while the Democratic party has been openly and distinctively opposed to it, still a third ticket was put into the field. It received only 413 out of the 5983 votes cast; but that small vote was enough to prevent an election, and the Democratic candidate for Mayor lacked only 33 votes of a plurality. In Portland, therefore, practically, free rum is in the ascendancy, by the action of the Prohibition party. So late as April 9, 1885, an inspector in the interests of prohibition reports that any person can find a dram-shop or a bar-room without asking the aid of a friend. A recent tour of observation through Portland showed that there, at least, hardly the pretense of secrecy is kept up. Through open doors regularly arranged bars of decanters could be seen, with men drinking in front of them. For the higher classes, the hotels scarcely hide in their basements their elegantly furnished drinking-rooms. Drug-shops scarcely disguise their liquors behind their soda fountains. No introduction is required. All these places are easy enough of access. Wide are the gates and broad the

ways that lure and lead to fiery death, and many there be that go in thereat.

The opinion entertained of Prohibition as a political issue is shown by the Prohibition vote for the Prohibition candidate in the original Prohibition State. Mr. St. John received in Maine 2160 votes, or scarcely more than one in fifty of the entire vote.

What political Prohibition has thus far done, may be summed up: By methods not only antagonistic but quarrelsome sometimes even to the borders of scurrility, by misrepresentations that charity alone can attribute to misunderstanding, it has shamed its own prophecies, destroyed its own harmony, depleted its own ranks, vitiated its own laws, defeated the party from which all prohibitory legislation has come, enthroned the party by which all prohibitory legislation has been opposed. This it can continue to do indefinitely; but no protestation on the part of its leaders, and no delusion on the part of its followers, can alter the fact that it is working in the interests of intemperance, and not in the interests of temperance. No intelligent observer can fail to recognize its character and its tendency.

GAIL HAMILTON.